by fellow trappers, through carelessness, or through having to be abandoned during Indian attacks.

Under these circumstances the quality of the traps was a matter of much concern both to the individual hunter and to the Company's officers. During the early years of the firm's operations on the Columbia there were frequent complaints that the traps and their all-important chains were faulty and broke easily. Ogden investigated this matter when he was at Fort Vancouver during the summer of 1826. He was satisfied that the difficulty did not lie with the depot blacksmith, who said the trouble was caused by the iron, which was "bad and not the proper kind that is required for Trapping."[762] Chief Factor McLoughlin took steps to remedy the situation, but improvement was long in coming.[763]

It is not surprising, then, that the British trappers much preferred American traps, which were originally sold "warranted good and generally prove to be so." Ogden said in 1827 that the American traps were "far more slender in make than our Traps but undoubtedly made of far superior materials."[764] There usually were a few American traps with the Snake expeditions, and they were found to give long service.

There were a number of other charges which had to be borne by trappers in the field. For example, if the men individually hired Indians to guide them to places where beaver might be found, the trappers who benefitted had to pay the natives for their services.[765]

Among the items distributed at the jump-off points were provisions. When stationed at the Company's posts or when traveling as

boatmen employees received rations at no cost, but when off on trapping expeditions both servants and freemen originally were expected to feed themselves. It was soon found, however, that there were sometimes long periods when the hunters and trappers could not find enough game to supply the people. This was particularly true on the Snake expeditions when, in addition to many barren areas, the routes to and from the trapping grounds had been quite thoroughly cleared of edible animals.

By at least 1826, therefore, substantial amounts of provisions were carried with the brigade. That year, for example, the packs of the brigade horses carried 300 pounds of flour, 21 bushels of corn and corn meal, 16 bushels of dried peas, 50 pounds of rice, and 120 pounds of tallow, in addition to brandy, rum, molasses, and salt.[766]

In 1832 John Work noted in his journal that he was occupied nearly a whole day at Fort Nez Percés in "delivering the people their provisions" before starting for the Snake Country.[767] It is not clear, however, whether this was Company food being distributed to servants for transport or whether these provisions were being sold to the men for themselves and their families. The journals are largely silent on such matters, but from occasional remarks it would appear that the leader kept a stock of provisions under his own control and gave them out during times of need if they were still available. Chief Trader McLeod, about to start southward from the Willamette Valley in 1826, noted: "their daily rations are issued to them [the servants?] consisting of Oatmeal and a piece of Venison when we can afford it."[768]

It seems clear, however, that these rations were primarily for servants and not for freemen. In October, 1826, when Ogden's party was traveling down Silvies River, the men for several days had not caught enough beaver to satisfy their hunger. At one point Ogden noted in his journal: "Freeman [sic] starving and had we not Corn we would be in the same predicament." But as more days passed with no success at hunting, Ogden relented and distributed some of his provisions to the freemen. When still more time went by with scarcely any beaver being caught, the hungry freemen came to the bourgeois and asked if they would be helped. The leader replied that they would be, "as I already had assist[ed] them in provisions as long as my stock lasted. and with this they appeared contented."[769]

Freemen were charged for all provisions received. The case with servants is not so clear, but evidently they had to pay also. In 1830 Peter Skene Ogden told John Work: "The Engaged Men are not entitled to any Rations from their starting from this [place] [Fort Nez Percés] to their Return and are obliged to supply you with food when in their power."[770] Engagés certainly had to pay for provisions for their families.

On the trail, if a Company horse died or was killed for food, its flesh was sold, not distributed gratis. During the summer of 1827 when Ogden's party was crossing the desert area northeast of Goose Lake, two "fine mares" belonging to the firm died from poisonous water or plants. "The meat however has not been lost," said Ogden, "for it has been purchased by the men for food."[771]

Both at the organizational camp and in the field the leader passed out ammunition to hunters to kill game. The resulting kills evidently were considered Company property at least in part, to be disposed of as were other provisions. But seemingly persons killing animals and bringing the meat into camp had an opportunity to gain credit by putting the flesh at the disposal of the Company. In 1826 A. R. McLeod noted, "of the animals lately killed three was left at the disposal of the hunters, the remainder taken for our mess and put to the Credit of P. Charles who killed them."[772] Possibly for this reason the bourgeois was usually careful to record in his journal how many animals and waterfowl were killed and who killed them.

The leader, if he was a chief trader or a clerk, was fed at the Company's expense, and he carried along a stock of food and condiments for his personal use. But generally his stores ran out long before the expedition ended, partly because humanity induced him to assist the ill and starving in times of privation. Postmasters and interpreters generally received an augmentation of their rations with a very few luxuries such as sugar and molasses. But all members of the party lived off the country as far as possible when beaver and game were available.

Every person on the expedition from the highest officer to the lowest laborer provided his own personal effects, which he had to buy from the Company, make himself, or acquire by trade. Under this classification came such important items as clothing, blankets, cooking utensils, needles and thread, and others. The situation

as regards guns and ammunition is not so clear. Guns may have been considered "hunting implements" and sold on the same terms as traps. Evidently freemen had to buy their ammunition, but it may have been issued to employees. On rare occasions the leader brought along a cloth tent, but usually he lived in a "lodge" or "hut" like everyone else.[773] In 1832 at Fort Nez Percés John Work "delivered the people horse agrès, leather lodges, &c."[774] It is not clear whether the lodges remained Company property or were issued on credit. Much research remains to be done on the subject of equipping trapping parties.

Among the most important pieces of equipment for any trapping brigade were guns. The men of a British beaver-hunting party carried both rifles and "guns," that is smoothbore muskets. Rifles were introduced on a major scale to the Columbia region by the Astorians, though at least some of the Nor'Westers used them also. But on the whole the British, even early Hudson's Bay men, seem to have commonly employed the musket.

Peter Skene Ogden, for one, much preferred to have his party armed with smoothbore guns. Although rifles could bring down game at a considerable distance, Ogden believed they caused a waste of ammunition, first because they were easily "deranged" and required the firing of at least twenty shots before they were pronounced in order and, second, because the vain marksmen on the Columbia failed to make allowance for distance and other factors influencing the trajectory of the bullet. He maintained that for every rifle shot

that killed, nine were wasted. With a musket on the other hand, a hunter usually had to be within twenty yards of his quarry and thus usually made a kill with six shots out of ten.[775]

But by the 1830s journals appear to indicate that rifles were frequently carried.[776] It is sometimes stated that one of the principal differences between a British brigade and an American one was that the men of the latter were armed with rifles while the people of the former used muskets. While there is some truth to this observation, the extent of the difference has been exaggerated, particularly for the later years. When in the field at least some of the Hudson's Bay trappers protected their rifles, and presumably their muskets also, with covers.[777]

The camps at the jumping-off points were busy, confusing, and picturesque. As the leather lodges -- the conical tepees adopted from the Indians of the Great Plains and usually made from buffalo hide -- were distributed they were erected if enough poles were available, but the usual practice was to cut the required ten long supports at an early stop on the trail.[778] The Grande Ronde was a favorite location for this purpose. Otherwise the people made do with makeshift brush and leather shelters.[779] The men were divided into messes -- four men and their families to each.[780] Presumably the people in each mess shared a common fire and pooled their culinary skills and resources in the preparation of meals. This organization was maintained throughout the march.

The people who made up the brigade were a diverse lot. Surviving rolls of members show that the overwhelming majority was composed of

French-Canadians.[781] There was usually a scattering of men with English surnames, some of whom were Americans who threw in their lot with the Company because the British paid more for furs and sold goods at lower prices than most of the American traders, particularly during the latter part of the 1830s and during the early 1840s.[782] On some expeditions Hawaiians were well represented, though their numbers declined as certain leaders came to believe these sturdy people unsuited for the trapper's life. On the earliest Snake expeditions there was a relatively high proportion of Eastern Indians, mostly Iroquois and Nipissings, but after many of them deserted from Ogden in 1825 they fell into disfavor, and only a few appear on the rosters of later brigades.

In addition, almost every expedition was accompanied by a number of male local Indians. Sometimes the proportion was relatively low. Work's 1832-1833 party, for instance, had only six Indians to twenty-eight "men" (Europeans, Hawaiians, and Eastern Indians). But Michel Laframboise's party which met Work in California contained seventeen male Indians to eighteen "men."[783] Some of these natives came along as volunteers, but many of them probably were slaves. The greater part of these unfortunates were the property of the native wives of the trappers, but before 1838 -- when the Company took strong steps to end the practice among its own employees -- it is possible that a few of the slaves belonged to officers, engagés, and freemen. On his 1829-1830 expedition, for example, Peter Skene Ogden's cook was a slave, although the bourgeois

did not specifically state that the servant was owned by him.[784]

The slaves were highly useful on a trapping expedition. They relieved their owners of much of the drudgery of camp life. They gathered the firewood, cleaned and processed the furs, packed the horses, and performed innumerable other tasks. Purser William A. Slacum, a United States naval officer who visited the Pacific Northwest in 1836-1837, falsely accused the Company of encouraging slavery and claimed that the use of slaves on trapping expeditions made for unfair competition with American rivals. He told the Congress that these captive workers saved the firm "the expense of employing at least double the number of men that would otherwise be required on these excursions."[785]

This claim was certainly a great exaggeration. Most leaders found these local Indians to be of only minor utility as far as the Company's interests were concerned. On the trail they were often considered fit merely to keep up the base camp while the trappers were scattered off to the beaver streams and to tend the horses in situations of relative safety from Indian attacks.[786] Occasionally, however, one of the local natives would be highly commended by the leader for bravery or useful service. But on the whole, the benefits derived from their presence were felt mostly by their individual owners.

Almost every trapping brigade was accompanied by the wives and children of the "men." Since the Company did not officially recognize the presence of these dependents their existence was not always

mentioned in the statements of the number of people in the party. They were never listed by name. Generally their presence is known only through incidental mention in the journals -- through notations that a wife or child was ill or had died, that a halt was made to allow a woman to give birth to an infant, and the like. But such numbers as were given provide ample proof that women and children made up a substantial part of nearly every caravan. John Work's 1832-1833 brigade, for instance, consisted of twenty-eight men, twenty-two women, forty-four children, and six Indians.[787]

The wives of the men were largely Pacific Slope Indians, although some of the men had brought native mates with them from east of the mountains. The consorts of the officers and clerks were quite often the offspring of European men and Indian women, although some of the "servants" had mixed-blood wives also. All of the Indian consorts and most of the half-breeds had been raised in the native cultures of their mothers and thus were well versed in the techniques of camp life and fully prepared to accept the hardships of the trail as the natural condition of existence.

The families were no mere useless appendages to the brigade. When slaves were not available they cooked the meals, tended the fires, and made the clothing of their men. They could put up lodges much more quickly than any European male.[788] As shall be seen in some detail, they generally skinned the beaver and dressed the pelts of the animals taken by their husbands. They dried meat for provisions and tanned deer, elk, and buffalo hides for a multitude of

purposes. What Slacum said about slaves may not have been entirely true, but it is certain that the Company saved a good deal of money by permitting the families to accompany the expeditions. Organized American trapping parties sometimes hired special camp tenders to perform the tasks that the wives of the British performed merely to help their mates.

The value of the women was amply demonstrated at the jump-off camp. There was always a lot of gear to repair or manufacture, and both men and women were set to completing these last-minute chores. At his camp in the Willamette Valley in May, 1826, Chief Trader McLeod noted that while the men were "employed arranging saddles for carrying the property" and "covering the Saddles made before our departure," the women were "sewing horse bags." Later the men were also out to making saddle bags from some parchment red deer skins that had been acquired."[789]

Before the party got under way, the leader sometimes called the men together and announced the rules and regulations under which the expedition would be conducted. At Flathead Post on the eve of his departure for the Snake Country early in 1824, Alexander Ross pointed out to his people the hardships and dangers which lay ahead and offered anyone who wished a chance to withdraw. All avowed their intention to go, so Ross emphasized the necessity of remaining alert and guarding the horses, "on which the success of the undertaking depended." He announced that a night watch would be established and rigidly enforced "upon every one in turn."[790]

At other times the rules were announced en route when the region of maximum danger was about to be entered. In September, 1827, Ogden found himself with ony seventeen men in the heart of the Snake Indian country at the mouth of Weiser River. "I assembled the whole party," he wrote in his journal, "and represented to them as our numbers are few and danger to be apprehended, that no one should sleep from camp, and this night we commence night guard on our horses and camp."[791]

Three years later, when coaching John Work on how to conduct a Snake expedition, Ogden outlined his usual "rules and regulations" in more detail: "No Man exempted from going on discovery or to any place required for the general Interest -- No Man exempted from night watch excepting the day Guard. No one is allowed to start before the Leader is ready and gives the calls the same in regard to Encamping, when 2/3 of the Trappers have their traps in the water it is understood you remain in Camp."[792]

As numerous journal entries over the years amply demonstrate, such admonitions and rule-making did not always produce the desired results. Instances of neglect of duty, carelessness, and outright disobedience were fairly common. Yet evidently the British trappers were better disciplined than most of their American counterparts. In 1834 Philadelphia naturalist John Kirk Townsend met Thomas McKay's Snake Party at Fort Hall on Snake River. "I admire the order, decorum, and strict subordination which exists among his men, so different from what I have been accustomed to see in parties composed of Americans," he commented.[793]

Getting a trapping brigade off from its base at the start of an expedition always presented a confusing but picturesque scene. Many of the horses were new stock, freshly obtained from the Indians or, later, from the nearly wild herds on the Company's grazing farms. Thus the horses and mules distributed to the men were frequently unbroken or at least not used to pack saddles and heavy burdens. In 1826 Ogden reported that when the animals for his third expedition were packed for the trail their loads were soon "scattered in all directions and a Keg contg. 16 lbs. Tallow was lost and if this should be the only loss we shall sustain by them we may consider ourselves fortunate."[794]

But at last the animals were subdued. The horses that had strayed were rounded up, and those "borrowed" by local Indians were recovered. The party could be on its way.

A fur brigade on the trail was a colorful sight. Sometimes before leaving the depot or other base post and more often upon returning from the field, the trappers and their families dressed themselves in clean clothes, put bright ribbons and feathers in their hats, and otherwise did honor to the festive occasion. A resident at the Methodist mission in the Willamette Valley described the Southern Party as it passed on its way to Fort Vancouver:

> This company, just before entering the settlement, which was early in the morning, stopped to remove from their persons stains and traces of travel and [to] dress themselves carefully in their best attire. They then formed themselves in Indian file, led by Mr. La Framboy, the chief of the party. Next [to] him rode his wife, a native woman, astride -- as is common with the females -- upon her pony, quite picturesquely clad. She wore a man's hat with long black feathers fastened in front and drooping behind her very gracefully. Her short dress was of rich broadcloth, leggins beautifully embroidered with gay beads and fringed with tiny bells, whose

musical tinkling could be heard at several hundred yards distance. Next, the Clerk and his wife, much in the same manner, and so on to the officers of less importance and the men, and finally the boys driving the packhorses, with bales of furs, one hundred and eighty pounds to each animal. The trampling of the fast-walking horses, the silvery tinkling of the small bells, rich, handsome dresses, and fine appearance of the riders, whose numbers amounted to sixty or seventy. The array was really patriarchal and had quite an imposing appearance.[795]

Lest the picture be painted too bright, however, this description should be contrasted with what a Catholic priest said concerning the Southern Expedition of 1839. "The brigade," he wrote, "is a hideous assemblage of persons of both sexes, devoid of principles and morals" and possessed of "revolting exteriors."[796]

A missionary who traveled for a while with Tom McKay's Snake Party of 1834 left a more balanced description of a Company brigade in the field:

> Our new party consisted of Mr. M'Kay, his Canadians, with their bows and arrows, wives, mounted in the fashionable native style, astride, and bearing muskets, and their children confined to a board, and hung on the horn of their saddles, or lashed on horseback alone, and some Indians with their squaws and children, in the same order.[797]

If the memory of a woman who as a very young child traveled in the Southern Party with her trapper father, Louis Aucent [or Osant], and her native mother was accurate, the journey to California was somewhat of a lark for the youngsters. She remembered how delighted she and her playmates, a daughter of Laframboise, were as they "passed under the expansive oaks of the Sacramento Valley to hear the dry leaves rustle under their horse' hoofs."[798]

Historians have sometimes assumed that Company trappers were universally "clad in buckskin."[799] Such was not the case, at least

during the early months of an expedition. In 1866 American trapper Joseph L. Meek was asked: "What badge did the Indian recognize as indicating a Hudson's Bay man?" He replied under oath: "They would tell them by their dress -- Scotch cap and red belt -- and their general appearance, they generally had [cloth] clothes, and we had but very few."[800]

The lists of "sundries" purchased by the freemen on expeditions include fairly extensive amounts of cloth of several types and limited numbers of capotes (blanket coats, generally with hoods), shirts, trousers, and "Mens Water proof Beaver Hats."[801] Presumably other items of clothing had been bought at the depot sale shop prior to departure. Strangely enough capotes, the almost universal outer winter garment of British traders and voyageurs east of the mountains and in some localities on the Pacific Slope, were seldom mentioned in the Snake or Southern expedition journals. Perhaps it was more convenient for mounted men to use the poncho. As worn by Hudson's Bay employees in the Far West, it consisted of "a blue or red blanket with a slit in the centre to put the head through, so this blanket covered the man, musket, powderhorn and everything else."[802]

Regardless of the material from which upper articles of clothing were made, however, it is highly probable that buckskin trousers were favored by the trappers. Even at Fort Vancouver "all" the gentlemen wore them, since riding on horseback and carrying a gun were "very destructive to cloth pantaloons."[803] And it is likely that some of the hunters wore complete bucksin "suits" from the very

outset of an expedition. As a number of western travelers discovered, no other kind of apparel was "so well suited . . . to the life of an Indian or trapper."[804]

Since the brigades were in the field for many months at a time, cloth clothing eventually wore out and was often replaced by articles made of deerskin. Expert Indian women, in a pinch and despite the rather complicated tanning process, could produce a leather suit within twenty-four hours after the skin had been taken from the animal.[805]

Once the expedition was on the trail the leader's most difficult work began. The conductor of a trapping brigade had no sinecure. His principal duty was to conduct his party to regions where beaver were plentiful so that the trappers could make a successful hunt. In the final analysis, his qualities as a leader would be judged by the amount of returns he brought back to the depot. Thus he needed to know which streams had been trapped to exhaustion by previous expeditions, both British and American. He had to be able to judge when trapped out streams could be expected to recover. And of course he was required to know where yet-untouched beaver grounds might be expected.

Another major responsibility was keeping his party in food. Even after Ogden had demonstrated that carrying provisions from the base was a necessity, the old practice of living off the land so heartily supported by thrifty Governor Simpson prevailed during the greater part of every journey. Thus the leader had to route his

expedition through regions where food -- beaver or other game -- could be found in quantities sufficient to prevent the slaughter of the horses to fill the cooking pots.

At least once on every long trip this search for food required a stay of several weeks or even months in a region where large game -- buffalo in the Snake Country, elk in California -- could be expected in quantity. Generally this pause took place during the winter when beaver hunting was difficult due to ice and snow in the Snake Country and to flooding in the Central Valley. The meat of the larger animals was required not only for an immediate food supply but as a stock of provisions for further travel, particularly for the homeward journey through areas denuded of game. The meat for this latter purpose was preserved by being dried over fires.

Many of the trappers were improvident, and year after year they would fail to put up enough provisions to see them through the hard times ahead. It was to the bourgeois's interest to encourage his men and their families to forego the immediate pleasure of eating all the meat immediately and to dry as much as possible.

The hides of the buffalo, elk, and deer killed in the search for meat were also important for the well-being of the expedition. The skins were tanned, mostly by the women, and utilized for a variety of purposes. Pack cords were always in demand. Leather covers were required to protect packs and appechemons while traveling through brush or dense woods.[806] Skin wrappers shielded packs of furs. It was the leader's responsibility to see that adequate supplies of leather were obtained.

If all else failed, food in the form of roots, fish, nuts and seeds, game, or horses had to be obtained from the Indians. Often the natives were reluctant to trade away their provisions, since they were generally short of supplies themselves. In the Snake Country the Indians encountered by the trappers were sometimes on the verge of starvation. All of the conductor's powers of persuasion and diplomacy were occasionally required to obtain even a few roots. And sometimes, particularly with the Snakes, it was necessary to surprise the natives and take the food "ere they have time to secure it." Ogden once said that "by any other means you cannot obtain anything from them . . . particularly Provisions," but he added, "not do I blame them as their resources are not great in such a wretched Country."[807]

Much of a leader's time was spent "buttering up" disgruntled employees and freemen so they would not desert or shirk their duties. The members of a trapping brigade, particularly the freemen, were an independent lot and once in the wilderness they tended to regard their obligations and indebtedness to the Company very lightly. Alexander Ross felt that the Iroquois were the most troublesome. In his opinion they were "improvident and thoughtless beings" who would trade away even their guns to the Indians for horses.[808] But many of the French-Canadians and mixed bloods were considered little better. They had an insatiable love for the hunt, especially the buffalo chase, and they would waste precious ammunition with reckless abandon in excessive slaughter. They often neglected their work to race horses or to slip away to trade horses with the

natives, a serious matter when they bartered with their powder and ball. Even in Blackfoot country they frequently showed a singular disregard for their own safety or that of the brigade. In particular, they were reluctant to stand night guard over the horses, even their own. When beaver were scarce or hardships piled up they tended to complain and occasionally become mutinous, hatching plots and wishing to break away from the main party.

With some reason Alexander Ross said of his men: "A more discordant headstrong, ill-designing set of rascals than form this camp, God never permitted together in the fur trade."[809] Governor Simpson was even more forceful when he described the "Snake Country Expedition" to the London directors in 1824: "This band of Freemen the very scum of the country and generally outcasts from the Service for misconduct are the most unruly and troublesome gang to deal with in this or perhaps any other part of the World, are under no control & feel their own independence they therefore require very superior management to make any thing of them."[810]

Except for such rare occurrences as the mass desertion of Ogden's men in 1825, the Company's officers generally managed by persuasion, promises, or threats to keep their parties together. But sometimes more positive measures were necessary. In April, 1826, while on Snake River, Ogden received word that three "half Breeds" in his camp were about to desert to join a nearby party of Flatheads. He promptly confiscated the men's horses, traps, arms, and blankets, but despite being thus severely handicapped they managed to slip

away. Soon tired of walking, however, they decided to rejoin the brigade. "One of them for his impudence," noted Ogden, "received a drubbing from me."[811]

In addition to such occasional major threats to the expedition as desertions and possible mutinies, there were minor acts of insubordination that could not be permitted to remain unnoticed. Here again, persuasion and reprimands were usually sufficient to remedy the situation. And at rare intervals the leader considered it the better part of wisdom to let insubordinate or incompetent people leave the brigade to join the Americans or the Indians. But at times it was necessary to be firm. In September, 1832, when Work's party was only a few days out from Walla Walla, one of the men "refused to go and seek after the stray horses tho' three of them were his own"

"I was obliged," wrote Work, "to knock him down & give him a beating."[812]

It was well to establish who was boss early in the trip. Certainly all conductors of parties could agree with McLoughlin when he said, "Freemen in the plains with their families starving about them are not easily led."[813]

The ability to deal effectively with Indians was another requisite for the leader of a trapping brigade. From the standpoint of the Company, the most important aspect of treating with natives was inducing them to trade their furs before the skins could fall into the hands of the Americans. But sometimes the leaders in the field were even more anxious to obtain food or horses in times of emergency.

The real test came, however, when the party was faced by overwhelming numbers of natives who displayed signs of hostility. Here again, diplomacy, coupled with the distribution of presents, was sometimes enough to turn away wrath. At other times the natives were permitted to observe the camp in a highly armed state of readiness. But if arrows were shot into the camp or at the horses, the British leaders did not hesitate to return the shots with rifle fire. On occasion, as with McDonald in 1823 and Ogden in 1829-1830, it was felt necessary to give the attackers severe lessons and to kill substantial numbers of them.

Almost everywhere the trapping expeditions went in the Snake Country, in Oregon, and in California they were plagued by Indian horse thieves. The Blackfeet were particularly troublesome, and small bands of them would sometimes dog a brigade for days hoping spirit away a few animals from the grazing herd. Some of the natives were so skillful at this trade -- for it was a business with many of them -- that they could steal horses from under the very noses of the guards without being detected. Any Indians discovered in the act of taking animals were immediately fired upon, but in the dark of night they were seldom hit.

When losses to Indian horse thieves were discovered, the leaders almost always sent men in pursuit if the expedition's remaining animals were not too weak. Indians overtaken in such chases were often shot. If trappers managed to surprise small bands of Blackfeet they usually massacred them in retaliation for past wrongs and as a deterrent to others in the future.

But on some occasions, when the stolen animals were discovered after an interval in the hands of natives, the conductors decided that a soft approach would pay better dividends in the long run. In such cases the Indians often claimed that they had only purchased the horses innocently from the actual thieves, and the brigade leaders found it impossible to determine the truth. Thus on June 2, 1826, when Ogden noticed two of his horses in a band belonging to a "notoriously bad Indian," he retrieved them "but not without giving a trifle to the Indian." A few days later he relieved a native of two mules stolen from a member of his party, but once more "a present was offered."[814]

At no time was the skill of the bourgeois in dealing with Indians more tested than when it came to obtaining the almost indispensable native guides. Such assistance was usually considered essential for traversing unknown territory. For example, when Peter Skene Ogden joined Finan McDonald's Umpqua party on the Deschutes River in December, 1825, he was highly disappointed to find that McDonald had not obtained guides for the projected journey eastward to Snake River. "I must now endeavour to find an Indian who knows the Country if we do not succeed in procuring one we must make the attempt without, and this will cause us great loss of time," he remarked in his journal. After two days of further searching he gave a present to a Nez Percé in his party "for past services also a bait ~~to induce~~ to induce an Indian to accompany us as a Guide." Perhaps this gesture was exactly what was required, for a native who seemed qualified was promptly enlisted, and the journey continued.[815]

But once obtained, guides frequently proved unreliable. Some claimed to be well acquainted with the region but proved not to be. Desertion of guides was not infrequent, particularly after they led a party into difficult terrain or to streams with no beaver. A common fault of guides was to promise that they knew of country, always farther ahead, where beaver abounded. But the promised riches frequently did not materialize. The conquistadores of New Spain would have comprehended the situation perfectly, but it took Ogden a while to learn. By the time he returned from his second Snake expedition he was wary of any glowing reports received from Indians.[816]

Although guides were necessary and even though they were sometimes excellent and of much assistance, the conductors of brigades generally found their use to be frustrating. "The anxiety and trouble Indian Guides give us is known only to those who are at their mercy," an exasperated Ogden once wrote.[817]

Another responsibility of the bourgeois was keeping the required daily journal of the expedition. This record served not only to keep superior officers and the directors informed of conditions in the trapping areas but it permitted them to judge the quality of the leadership. It also provided invaluable data upon which to plan future expeditions. In 1824 Alexander Ross told Ogden, his successor as head of the Snake Brigade: "It is indeed Shameful that no Correct Journal of the Snake Country has ever yet appeared to point out where Beaver are and where beaver are not." As a consequence, he added, "Much time is lost Wandering through these parts."[818]

The financial records of an expedition apparently were quite extensive. Goods and provisions sold were charged against the men's accounts; furs and game received were credited. Losses of horses, traps and other issued items were recorded. Overhead expenditures, such as gifts to guides and other Indians, had to be accounted for. When no clerk accompanied the brigade, as was generally the case, these bookkeeping chores fell upon the conductor.

The leader served as the doctor for the brigade. Illness, accidents, and wounds inflicted by Indians or by fellow trappers were among the ever-present hazards of the trail. A small stock of medicines was carried along on each trip, but if there were many cases of sickness such as occurred on Work's 1832-1833 journey to California, these supplies were soon exhausted.

The bourgeois were not trained doctors by any means. Many cases were far beyond their capabilities to treat. During 1826, for example, two of Ogden's men were severely wounded by Indian arrows. Both recovered, but they had to carry the arrowheads in their bodies until they returned from the expedition, because no one in the party felt qualified to remove them.[819]

But the leaders usually did the best they could when faced with medical emergencies. They administered purges and vomits, concocted doses of gunpowder and vinegar when other remedies were not available, and even bled their patients. When a number of his men became incapacitated from eating the meat of beaver that had fed on wild hemlock, Ogden "made a guinea pig of himself." He deliberately downed some of the tainted flesh, evidently in an effort to determine

if any discernable characteristics distinguished the bad meat from the good. "I never suffered more for three hours," he wrote after the poison finally took effect; "the pain was great and it left me so weak I could scarcely crawl."[820]

At times, however, when medicines were exhausted or for other reasons, the ill or injured had to get on as best they could on their own or with the assistance of family or friends. If a man dropped behind from some disability or if he was injured while separated from the party, every effort was made to bring him into camp and to get him on his feet again. Instances in which the entire party halted for several days to enable a sick person to recover or to permit a woman to give birth to a child were fairly common. If a person could be moved but was too disabled to ride unassisted, he was sometimes tied on the saddle. In a few extreme cases patients were carried on litters.

On the other hand, even severe illnesses or wounds were sometimes treated rather cavalierly -- even callously. In 1826 a freeman in Ogden's party lost a forefinger and part of a thumb when his gun burst. Ogden merely noted that the man "appears" to suffer great pain and [it] will be some time ere he recovers."[821] As Ogden wrote in 1827, "a sick person on a journey of this kind is not only a burden to himself but still more so to all and the Canadians . . . are not over stocked with tender feelings."[822]

An example of this apparent heartlessness, born of the necessity for maximizing returns, occurred during July, 1826. Indians reported that one of Ogden's Hawaiian trappers was "very sick" at

some distance from camp. "If so," wrote the leader in his journal, "he is requested to come here, that his traps may not remain useless they will be parcell'd among the other men, should he be unable to employ them to advantage."[823]

A person who was disabled so severely that he could not go forward even on a horse presented a great problem. If an expedition was to be a financial success it could not afford to halt for long in one place during the trapping season. Beaver and game would soon be exhausted, and grass for the horses would become scarce. To move on was imperative.

In such cases a variety of expedients was possible. As has been seen, sometimes two or more of the disabled man's friends volunteered to remain behind with him until he recovered or died. In December, 1826, when Ogden was traveling along the shore of Upper Klamath Lake, a woman with the party who had been ill for a considerable period was left in the care of a Klamath chief. This was, said the leader, "with her own consent and by her request." If she recovered she could rejoin the party if it returned by the same route; if it did not she was to find her way to the Willamette Valley.[824]

If a member of the party died or was killed in the field every effort was made to give the person a decent burial. At times, however, danger from Indians made it impossible to recover the bodies of men killed away from camp. And in Indian country the trappers sometimes went to considerable lengths to disguise graves so that they would not be desecrated. A usual practice was to bury the man in camp and then build a fire over the spot.[825] In one case,

along Snake River, a man was buried beneath a beaver dam for this reason.

When possible a modest ceremony marked the interment. In 1834 John Kirk Townsend witnessed the burial of a Canadian belonging to Thomas McKay's Snake Party. Since the death occurred near Fort Hall, the arrangements were more elaborate than would have been the case in the wilderness. The body was "wrapped in a piece of coarse linen, over which was sewed a buffalo robe." A Methodist preacher performed "the ordinary church ceremony," after which a hymn for the repose of the soul of the departed, was sung by the Canadians present." The grave was surrounded by a "neat palisade of willows" and marked by a black cross.[826] Even on the trail, when the grave was concealed, trappers traditionally inscribed a nearby tree with the name, age, and date of death of the deceased.[827]

Because the life of a trapper was so hazardous, men sometimes made their wills before departing on an expedition. In 1829 Alexander Carson addressed the following letter, witnessed by three officers, to Chief Factor John McLoughlin at Fort Vancouver:

> As I am on the Eve of starting for the Snake Country I have to request in case of any Accident happening to me that you will please pay to Mr. William Canning on Order any Sum or Sums of Money which may be due to me by the Hudson Bay Company and also give him all and whatever Effects you may have in your possession appertaining to me.[828]

When a man died or was killed on an expedition it was customary to auction off his clothing and other property. The receipts were credited to his account for the benefit of his family or other heirs.

In addition to serving as doctor, the leader of an expedition assisted his people in a multitude of other ways. When one of his men became lost in the Siskiyou Mountains early in 1827, Ogden went out in the middle of the night,, climbed a high hill, and fired shots to direct the man toward camp. He was unsuccessful, but when the trapper wandered in the next morning without shoes and with slightly frozen feet, Ogden gave him both hot broth and a lecture. He despaired at the general carelessness of the men for their own safety. Green hands, he believed, were the worst offenders in this regard, and he preferred "good steady Men" in his brigades.[829]

Except for making a good hunt and providing for the well-being of his people, a leader's most important responsibility was to see that the party's horses and mules received the best possible care. These animals were essential to the success of any trapping expedition. As was proved on more than one occasion, the people could make it back to the base fort on foot if the horses were lost, but the furs had to be left behind. Only rarely was travel by canoe practicable in the Snake Country.

If the character of the country permitted, the conductor was careful to select camping spots where grass and water were adequate. When no danger from Indians was apprehended, the animals were sometimes allowed to roam free at night. In no other way could they get enough to eat in the often spare grasslands of the Snake Country. On such occasions a long rope or cord left to dangle from the bridle and trail on the ground made it easier to catch each horse in the morning.

In Indian country, however, horses were closely herded and guarded at night. Ogden recommended that four or five men should stand guard each watch. When danger from horse thieves was extreme, the animals were tied at night, but this practice was employed as infrequently as possible because it prevented the horses from getting proper nourishment. In such cases the animals were "grassed" in the morning as close to the camp as possible.[830]

As Ogden, Work, and McLeod discovered, cold winters could be devastating to the horse herds, particularly in the Snake Country. In February, 1831, John Work wrote in his journal: "This cold weather is severe on our lean horses, one is nearly dead this morning, 3 died at our last camp."[831] During the bitter winter of 1827-1828 on Snake River, Ogden's trappers were at first rather slipshod in their care of their livestock. But one morning the horses were found reduced to "a very low state." The men, evidently at long last convinced by Ogden that most of the animals might be lost, "started with robes and skins to cover them and to endeavour if possible to preserve them."[832]

Alexander Ross, on the other hand, believed the horses could not only survive winters on the trail but actually thrived during the cold season. Speaking of his brigade's animals, he said:

> No fodder is provided for them . . . . In snow up to their bellies and often a crust on the top as hard as ice, the horses beat down the crust, scrape off the snow with their forefeet, and feed on the dry and withered grass at the bottom, and passing the winter without a drop of water except from the icicles and snow they happen to eat with their dry and tasteless food. After passing the night in this manner they are bridled, saddled and ridden about by the hunters all day; and when they

> arrive at night, covered with sweat, tired and hungry, they are turned out again to dig their supper . . . in a cold ranging from 20 to 50 below zero of Fahrenheit's thermometer. The exercise may keep them in some degree warm; but the labour necessary to procure their food during night is full as fatiguing and laborious as their labour by day! and yet, these hardy and vigorous animals are always in good condition![833]

But even Ross had to admit that the horses and mules often suffered cruelly from the rocky terrain found in many parts of the Snake Country. At one point during his 1824 expedition he found that nearly half his animals were "more or less lame, their hoofs being worn to the quick." In a more general vein he continued: "Without being shod no animals can stand the journeys through such rugged country. After one Snake expedition many of them are rendered useless ever after. No less than seventy-seven of our horses had to be muffled about the feet with leather, which is at best a temporary makeshift."[834] It was important, therefore, for the bourgeois to regulate the route and the length of each day's march so as to spare the animals as much suffering as possible.

On the trail as at the base camp, a never-ending task was the rounding up of stray horses. Nearly every morning when the animals were not tied one or more would be found missing from the herd. Quite often the absent stock, because of careless guarding, had simply scattered and wandered away searching for food. Sometimes they were startled by storms or marauders. On one occasion Ogden reported that a band of wolves drove off forty-nine horses from his herd.[835] Indians were responsible for many losses.

Searches for missing animals were usually tedious and time-consuming, and they were often fruitless. If tracks showed that

Indians had taken the stock, men were sent in pursuit. As has already been discussed in part, if the thieves were overtaken, the outcome of the confrontation varied according to the number of the Indians and their tribe.

If a group of Balckfeet, for example, outnumbered the pursuers, a fight could take place. But if the thieves were outnumbered and out-gunned they often matter of factly gave up the horses without any display of hard feelings. In the words of Ogden, who had a vast experience in such matters, the Blackfeet and Snakes showed "considerable ingenuity and address in stealing Horses and when pursued and overtaken they make all the resistance they can but when in vain resign themselves to their fate without expressing the least regret for their crime but are surprised we do not retaliate in kind on theirs [;] with Indians in general Horse stealing is not considered a crime but viewed more as a profession."[836]

Indians belonging to certain other groups would also give up the animals peaceably if confronted, but others would deliberately kill or wound the horses from spite before fleeing. Some natives only stole because they were starving. In such cases there was little chance of recovering the animals alive.

But trapping was the main business of a fur brigade, and it was the leader's job to make certain that his men gathered the greatest possible number of pelts. Like a general, he disposed his forces for maximum effectiveness. Exactly how this was accomplished depended on a variety of circumstances -- the probable number of beaver as indicated by observed "signs," the terrain, the presence or

absence of hostile Indians or rival trappers, and the availability of grass, wood, and water, to name a few.

When an expedition approached new beaver country or was testing the availability of beaver in a region previously trapped, a usual procedure with the British brigades was to send a number of trappers -- the strength of the detachment depending on the anticipated degree of danger from Indians -- ahead along the stream the main party was following. The next day or later the same day the camp would start out and move until it "reached the end" of the traps set by the advance hunters. Here a halt would be made. The traps would be hauled out of the water in the afternoon or evening and then "fresh set" for the night. On Ogden's expeditions, at least, the advance party was to hunt only the main stream, leaving the tributaries for members of the rear party. This process was repeated until a promising hunting ground was found.[837]

Once a good location for beaver was discovered, the leader selected "a safe and secure spot near wood and water" for a camp which was called "headquarters."[838] Here the conductor and the "property" remained. With him he kept the families, as well as the Indians and perhaps a few other men to guard the horses. The trappers were sent out to test the nearby streams for beaver. It was not unusual for "all" the hunters to be away setting their traps before nightfall on the same day the camp was established.

According to Alexander Ross, however, the more routine procedure at "headquarters" was as follows: "From hence all the trappers, some on foot, some on horseback according to the distance they have to go, start every morning in small parties in all directions,

ranging the distance of some twenty miles around. Six traps is the allowance of each hunter, but to guard against wear and tear the complement is more frequently ten. These he sets every night and visits again in the morning sometimes oftener; according to the distance or other circumstances. The beaver taken in the traps are always conveyed to the camp, skinned . . . and the flesh used for food. No sooner therefore has a hunter visited his traps, set them again, and looked out for some other place [to hunt the next day] than he returns to camp, to feast and enjoy the pleasures of an idle day."[839]

But a perusal of fur brigade journals reveals that the procedure was not always this cut and dried. In fact there was a good deal of variation, although Ross was correct in one regard: the scattered parties were usually small, the actual size depending on the degree of danger anticipated from the Indians. In the Snake Country the general rule was that trappers should not go out alone. In 1832 as Work's party was traveling along Silvies River signs indicated the presence of the Snakes, whom the Chief Trader characterized as "very treacherous barbarous Indians." As a result, he noted, "The men are directed to be particularly careful when hunting & never to go less than two together lest they be surprised."[840]

The hunters may have left camp in small parties, but once they got on the beaver streams they sometimes separated. Accounts of Indian attacks reveal that trappers occasionally were off working alone when they were jumped by Indians or when they escaped the fate that befell companions setting traps nearby.

Historians of the fur trade sometimes state that one of the differences between British brigades and American parties was in their relative sizes, the Hudson's Bay companies usually being larger and more compact while the Americans "scattered everywhere in small parties, sometimes of four men or less."[841] While it is true that the British brigades were year after year on a regular basis larger than the American parties, some of the better organized groups from Missouri were fully as large as the Snake brigade as far as the number of men was concerned, though the Americans were less likely to have families along. And when it came to the small bands that did the actual trapping, there was very little difference between British and Americans as far as size and hunting methods were concerned.

As Ross indicated and as Ogden told his people in 1827, the trappers were not supposed to remain away from the headquarters camp over night. Again, however, the journals reveal that this rule was often broken, though on such occasions the men usually either were ordered to stay out or received permission to do so. Trappers sometimes remained away from the main party for several days or even for weeks, generally for as long as they were taking beaver or until the date assigned for them to rejoin the brigade.

Although the Columbia Department fur returns shipped to London contained a variety of pelts -- badger, bear, fisher, fox, lynx, martin, mink, muskrat, sea otter, and others -- the trapping brigades were really only interested in beaver skins, though land otters and sea otters were taken if found. But since the British brigades also traded with the Indians, a number of assorted pelts sometimes turned

up in the returns. This was particularly true after 1833 when the Snake Party shifted its emphasis from trapping to trading. In 1846, for example, the Snake expedition yielded more muskrat than beaver skins.[842]

In the great days of the Snake expeditions and during the life of the Southern parties, however, it was beaver the trappers sought. And the search was difficult and dangerous. Alexander Ross painted a graphic picture of the anxiety under which a trapper worked: "[Since] the enemy generally is lurking about among the rocks and hiding places watching an opportunity, the hunter has to keep a constant lookout. And the gun is often in one hand, while the trap is in the other; but when several are together, which is often the case in suspicious places, one half set the traps and the other half keep guard over them. Yet notwithstanding all the precautions some of them fall victims to Indian treachery."[843]

While keeping alert for the "dreadful war-whoop," the trapper had to exert a considerable physical effort to carry out his mission. Arriving at a place where "sign" -- a dam, a runway, tree cuttings, and the like -- showed the presence of beaver, he placed his heavy traps on his back -- each one weighed between two and a half and five pounds without the attached chains -- took his rifle in his hand, and walked quietly along the bank or, better, in the water until experience told him he had arrived at a good spot to "make his set."

His next move was to cock his trap. This was fairly easily accomplished, if firm ground was available, by standing with a foot

on each spring. If no solid base could be found, a special "squeezer" made of two sticks was employed.

Next, if he had not done so before opening his trap, the hunter prepared a bed for his trap, wading in the water while doing so in order to leave no human scent. This bed had to be about four inches beneath the surface of the water, so it was usually necessary either to excavate or to fill the stream bottom. The trap was placed on its bed, and the attached trap chain, about five feet long with a ring on its free end, was extended to its full length into deeper water. A long stake, called a "float stick," was driven through the chain ring and deep into the stream bed. This pole was always made of dead wood to prevent the beaver from gnawing it for food.

The final step was to place the "bait." A thin twig or switch was fastened to the bank or bottom so that one end, peeled of bark, hung about four to six inches above the water and directly over the trap pan. The free end of the stick was smeared with castoreum which the trapper carried in his bait bottle. Having completed his set, the hunter waded away for a considerable distance before stepping on the shore. He repeated this process until all his traps were in place.

The beaver, drawn by the scent of the castoreum ("the musty secretion of the beaver's perineal glands"), attempted to reach the bait with his mouth and in so doing stepped on the pan of the trap and was caught. Seeking escape he headed for deeper water but could get no farther than the length of the chain from the stake. Held

down by the weight of the trap he drowned. Sometimes a beaver was able to pull the float stick from the stream bottom and to go a considerable distance under water before succumbing; occasionally a trapped beaver made it to shore, but the heavy trap and the float stick, which could easily get caught in brush or other obstructions, made it difficult for him to escape if the hunter arrived before the animal could gnaw himself free.[844]

Theoretically if fresh signs of beaver were observed, the traps placed by this method should have produced a beaver at almost every set. But beavers were timid, wily, and intelligent animals who often refused to be caught. In addition, there were many other factors leading to failure. Indians quite frequently stole traps or took the trapped beaver for food; or the natives broke the beaver dams and made the animals "very wild."[845] The waters of the Far West, whether from spring thaws in the mountains or from tidal rise and fall near San Francisco Bay, tended to fluctuate in depth. But for trapping the depth of the water was critical. Peter Skene Ogden explained the reason succinctly: "Few," he noted in his journal in 1827, "are aware of the strength of Beaver when taken if the water is shallow which is often the case in small streams and he does not drown it is scarrely credible the resistance he makes and if the Trap be good or bad he soon proves it, when taken by the fore foot in shallow water he soon makes for Land and is not long in freeing himself of the Trap by resorting to his grinders soon performs amputation but in deep water by placing the Traps from four to six inches under water he is

taken by the hind foot and cannot manage to amputate and soon drowns."[846]

American trappers ordinarily skinned their beaver near where they were taken and only brought the pelts, the castorum glands, and the tails -- considered a delicacy -- back to camp.[847] According to Ross, however, Hudson's Bay hunters "always" carried the entire animal to camp, since the flesh was used for food.[848] If there were no families along, the hunters skinned the carcasses and dried and folded the skins themselves, but usually these tasks were assumed -- expertly -- by the women. On rare occasions, however, the men performed these chores even when the families were present. During March, 1827, Ogden found his party camped in the Rogue River region, soaked by rain. "The Trappers are not idle," he wrote, "and we have a number of green skins that must be dressed without delay fair or foul weather." The next day the sky cleared, and he noted: "the men in the Camp dress'd their Beaver and the Lady's employed all day in Skin[n]ing and dressing also drying the meat."[849]

During that same expedition Ogden on one occasion remarked in his journal: "It is a pleasure to observe the Ladys of the Camp vieing with each other who will produce on their return to Fort Vancouver the cleanest and best dress'd Beaver."[850] And, as has already been mentioned, the quality of the Snake Party returns improved considerably under Ogden's direction. This achievement was not due solely to any affection his people may have had for him. He told Work in 1830: "The Men in general are careful of their Beaver. Still you will require to give both them and the leaders [ladies] a hint occasionally by reminding the former a Shilling less

will be paid for each skin and the latter their usual presents will be curtailed [if their furs have not been properly dressed and cared for]."[851]

Skinning a beaver was a fairly standardized procedure. The skin was slit the length of the animal's under side; then cuts were made along the inside of each leg and around the base of the tail. The feet were cut off and the pelt peeled from the carcass, eased along if necessary by a blunt instrument such as an elk bone wedge which would not cut the skin.

The skin was then scraped with a sharp knife or axe blade to remove any clinging fat and flesh. Next it was stretched on a hoop which ranged from eighteen inches to three feet in diameter, depending on the size of the skin. These hoops were made from willow withes bent circular by binding the ends together. The edges of the pelt were sewed to the hoop with cord or sinew. The stretched skins were dried by being exposed to the sun, flesh side to the direct rays.[852]

After it was dried, the pelt was folded once, fur side in. In this condition a beaver skin weighed from one and a half pounds to two pounds for adults and about half that for pups.[853] About fifty to sixty plus, as the furs were sometimes called, were piled together and pressed tightly to make a pack weighing about ninety pounds.[854] Each pack was protected by a tight wrapper of dry leather -- deerskin most often but elk or buffalo hides at times.[855]

British fur brigade journals thus far examined for this study are silent as to the method used to press the pelts in the field. It

is known that American trappers improvised several types of crude presses, and it is assumed the Company's men did likewise.[856]

Two packs, with a total weight of about 180 pounds, made the normal load for a pack animal. But once the furs were safely placed on the horse or mule the work of caring for them was not over. Even if no accidents were encountered during the journey, the pelts had to be unpacked at intervals and "dusted," that is beaten to eliminate dangerous insects and aired to dry out any moisture. In damp climates mildew was always a danger. Of course if packs got wet in crossing streams or because of rain or brushing against damp foliage, the skins were dried in the sun. As Ogden remarked in 1827, the furs "cannot be two [sic] often examined."[857]

As long as two-thirds of the hunters had their traps in the water a camp ordinarily remained stationary. But when the beaver in one locality were so reduced in numbers or so thoroughly frightened that trapping was no longer profitable, the brigade moved on.

At rare intervals before a camp was shifted the men hid or "cached" some of their supplies, provisions, equipment, and even furs. The usual reason for this expedient was a desire to lighten the load when the party intended to return to that spot at a later date. Sometimes, however, the cache was a matter of necessity, as was the case when McLeod lost all his horses in 1829. Without pack animals or if makeshift canoes could not be employed, there was no way to get the heavy baggage and returns to the home fort. The goods were therefore concealed with the intention of returning for them at a more convenient time or with renewed means of transportation.

The classic description of a cache is given by the great fur-trade historian, Hiram Martin Chittenden:

> The cache, as ordinarily prepared, consisted of a deep pit in the ground in the construction of which the point of paramount importance was to avoid any trace of the work which might attract attention after it was completed. The size of the pit depended upon the quantity it was to hold . . . . The pit was lined with sticks and dry leaves after which the goods were carefully disposed therein, and all perishable articles, such as provisions or fur, were protected with the utmost care. This was a vital matter for it frequently happened that valuable articles were found spoiled.[858]

Occasionally natural caves, hollow tree trunks, or other suitable hiding places were used, but the general rule was to dig a hole in the ground. These pits could be circular, square, or bottle-shaped.[859] A usual means of concealment was to build a fire over the filled hole. If a cache was dug in a grass-covered location, the sod was carefully replaced and all surplus soil disposed of in a stream or other place where it would not be detected by sharp-eyed Indians.

Although most caches were for goods of the brigade as a whole, individual trappers sometimes separately hid their individual property. The hunters of the Southern Party, for example, occasionally cached their traps at the Marysville Buttes or other favorite camping spot so that they would not have to carry these heavy implements to Fort Vancouver and then all the way back to California again the next year. Evidently these hunters did not trust their fellow trappers, since each man often secretly hid his own traps.[860]

Breaking camp also involved other traditional and necessary procedures. It has been seen that Ogden informed Work in 1830 that it was customary for the leader to give "the <u>calls</u>" to get the party

in motion on a moving day and to indicate where to camp in the afternoon. The nature of the calls is not indicated, but it is likely, though nowhere so stated, that the traditional canoe brigade call of "levé, levé, levé" was used to awaken the camp at dawn.[861] When Alexander Ross led his party to the Lost River region in 1824 he wrote: "Got a drum made for the use of the camp. It is beat every evening regularly at the watch over the horses and to rouse all hands in the morning."[862] It is not known that his successors employed a similar instrument.

If it had been raining shortly before a moving day, the start was usually delayed several hours to dry the lodges, packs, and other equipment. Since wet brush and tree branches could damage the furs, it was also necessary to wait for the foliage to dry if the trail ahead went through dense woods or brush.

Since trapping brigades largely lived off the country, hunting was a major consideration. Ordinarily each party contained several men who were designated as "hunters," and they were sent out almost daily searching for game. Depending on the country traversed, deer, elk, antelope, and even bear were the principal animals killed. But the favorite food of the trappers was buffalo. During the days of the large brigades these animals were fairly numerous in parts of the Snake Country, and when a herd was encountered almost the entire company joined in the chase. General hunting also was common when food was scarce.

Evidently when the men killed game on their own, that is when

not designated hunters, they could keep it for themselves and their families except for the portions they were obligated to turn in to the bourgeois. Ogden records an instance when men sent out to look for a horse returned to camp with four deer. "Unfortunately," he commented, "it so happens those that kill with the exception of two are not of a very generous disposition."[863] In times of hunger, some of the men who were sufficiently successful at hunting to satisfy their own needs would sell the meat to their less fortunate companions. When this occurred in 1827 during one of Ogden's expeditions, the going price was a beaver pelt for a deer. He attempted to discourage the practice by assisting the needy himself. But he could not be too strict, for he realized that if starving men could not buy meat they would kill their horses.

Wildfowl were also much relished when they could be shot, but they were not a dependable source of food for a large party. It took a great many ducks and geese to satisfy the hunger of a band of active trappers.[864] Little attention was paid to fishing while on the trail of beaver, but salmon and other fish were obtained from the Indians whenever opportunity offered.[865] And in extremity the trappers would fish themselves. When Ogden's men were nearly starving in the Lower Klamath Lake region during December, 1826, they made a net and tried fishing.[866]

The trappers did not scorn dog meat whenever these animals could be traded from the Indians. Although the French-Canadians especially were fond of this food, even officers ate it on occasion and found it

palatable.[867] When extremely hungry the trappers bargained with the Indians for camas roots and other native foods even though such exotic fare often made them ill.

But as the daily journals clearly reveal, large game, wildfowl, and traded provisions were at times extremely scarce in the Snake Country and even in southern Oregon and California. For much of the time the expedition personnel, from the leader downwards, ate the flesh of the beaver caught in the traps. Unlike the Americans, the British consumed the flesh from the entire carcass of the animal and not merely that supreme mountain delicacy, the tail. From all indications beaver meat was generally liked, although on certain streams eating it could cause severe illness due, it was believed, to hemlock ingested by the animals. A crude remedy of gunpowder and pepper mixed with water seemed to give some relief. On most trips through the Snake Country beaver meat was the usual staple.

Whenever the beaver and other game failed, resort was had to killing the expedition's horses. Horse meat was considered a delicacy, and the men did not always wait until they were starving to eat it. Any horse or mule that met an accidental death or which had to be killed because it could not keep up with the party was almost sure to find its way to the cooking pot. In 1826, for instance, when some of Ogden's men inadvertently strangled a wild horse in trying to break it in, the leader remarked that though the animal was lost, "his flesh shall not share the same fate -- as already it has been distributed to every lodge in the camp."[868]

Cooking generally was a simple matter. Boiling in kettles was the preferred method, but meat was also roasted on sticks before the fire.[869] British trappers, at least, believed beaver meat needed to be "uncommonly well cooked more so with the exception of Bears flesh than any other food."[870] Occasionally the cooking had a gourmet touch. British botanist David Douglas, traveling with McLeod's 1826-1827 Southern Party, was amused when one of the French-Canadians "served shoulder of doe for breakfast, basting it with Canada mint and sugar and serving it on salal leaves in lieu of plates."[871]

Chief Trader John McLeod, who headed the Snake Party to the American rendezvous in 1836, told a missionary: "There is no Sabbath in this country."[872] Hudson's Bay Company brigade journals reveal that this statement was largely true. Ordinarily the parties moved and the men trapped on Sunday as on any other day of the week. Only rarely did a journal entry read, as did John Work's for January 22, 1832: "This being Sunday we did not raise camp."[873] But at least a sprinkling of the people made an attempt to observe the day. Botanist David Douglas, with McLeod's 1826-1827 expedition, "noted that the only distinguishing marks of a Sunday on the trail were a changing of linen by some of the more fastidious mountain men and a perusal of Catholic religious tracts in the evening."[874]

Christmas Day also often passed without any special recognition, at least as far as the journals reveal. John Work's record was again an exception to the general rule when he wrote on Sunday, December 25, 1831: "Being Christmas Day we did not raise camp. Owing to our not

having fallen in with buffalo lately many of the people fared but indifferently having only dry meat, and several not much of that."[874] On December 25 a year earlier, however, he made no mention of the day being Christmas.[876]

But there were two holidays that were almost always observed -- All Saints' Day and New Year's Day. Work's journal entry for November 1, 1830, was typical: "This being All Saints Day and a fast & holiday with the Canadians we did not raise camp."[877] New Year's Day was the most enthusiastically and universally celebrated holiday, however, as is shown by Work's note for January 1, 1832: "This being Sunday and New Years Day neither our people nor the Indians went in pursuit of buffalo tho' large herds were to be seen far off. The men and some of the principal Indians were treated with a dram and some cakes in the morning, and a small quantity of rum had been brought from the fort for the occasion."[878] A number of other journals attest to the fact that this "treat" of rum and cakes was an established custom.

Almost never did the brigade members have an opportunity to observe Easter properly. But in 1833, when Work's party was camped near Sonoma in California, the leader noted: "This being Easter day we did not raise camp. Some of the people went to the Mission to hear divine service."[879]

Since receiving its license to the exclusive right of British trade in the region west of Rupert's Land in 1821, the Company had maintained a policy of abolishing or restricting the use of liquor in trade with Indians. But it was not enforced in the frontier

regions of bitter competition with Canadian free traders or with Americans and Russians.[880]

The Snake Country was one of the most fiercely contested areas in the entire field of the Company's operations. Yet liquor seems to have been a minor consideration in the firm's campaign to control the trade of the region. Ogden's brigade of 1827-1828, for example, did carry in its outfit from Fort Vancouver three gallons of brandy, twenty-one gallons of "Demerara Rum," and three and one-eigth gallons of Jamaica rum.[881] These items, however, were listed as "Provisions," and they probably constituted little more than the spirits required for a party of thirty men which was expected to be in the field for nearly a year.

It seems doubtful that much of this liquor was available for trading. In fact, when in his winter camp on Snake River Ogden's journal entries appear to imply that he had none, at least for trade. He feared that a party of Americans camped near him would travel to their base near Great Salt Lake and then return with reinforcements to trade and trap. "I principally dread their returning with liquor," he remarked in his journal. "If so it would be most advantageous to them but the reverse to me." Then he added, "had I the same opportunity . . . long since I would have a good stock of liquor here, and every beaver in the [Indian] camp would be mine."[882]

In 1840 McLoughlin carried this restriction a step further. He told the Governor and Committee on November 20, 1840, "this year we

have entirely abolished the use of Spiritous Liquors among the trappers in the Snake Country and I am happy to be able to say with the most beneficial effect."[883] But by that time the great days of the brigades were over, so the long-suffering veterans of the Snake Party did not have to suffer this denial of one of their few comforts.

In addition to the excessive trading and racing of horse, perhaps the principal vice of the Company's trappers was gambling. At his winter camp on Snake River in January, 1828, Ogden neatly summed up the situation among his snowbound men: "they are now making snow shoes and the remainder pass their time in gambling. I know not how it happens but from the best of my knowledge, no cards are sold to the men at Fort Vancouver still they continue to procure them at that place and this year no less than four packs. It so happens that he who can least afford it is the greatest gambler and also loser since we have been in winter quarters. From the dawn of day till late at night they are gambling, and from all appearances are determined to continue as long as we are obliged to remain idle."[884]

At the end of their journey the people had a few days or, if they were lucky, a few weeks to "enjoy themselves" resting with their families at Fort Nez Percés or strutting about the village at Fort Vancouver. But soon enough they were headed back for the hard and precarious life on the trail.

What it meant to be a trapper with a Hudson's Bay Company fur brigade has never been better stated than by Peter Skene Ogden as he sat in his camp in southern Oregon on March 14, 1827, immobilized

by snow and rain: "It is certainly most harassing for the poor Trappers to Trap in such weather, obliged to sleep out and two thirds without a Blanket to cover them. Still not one complains but exert themselves to procure Beaver with all their might & main.

"Poor fellows, at times at least when I see them arrive, which is too often the case in this climate, drenched in rain and shivering with cold [I] feel most keenly for them. The life of a Trapper, altho' at times he has some idle hours which however does not often happen, is certainly a most laborious one and one [which] in four years makes a young man look almost as if he had reached the advanced age of sixty. Of this many convincing proofs are now amongst my party. The cold water which more or less they are wading in two thirds of the day, added to the cold and sleeping often without fire and wet to the skin, conduces to ruin their constitutions. Well do they earn their 10 Shillings per Beaver. A convict in Botany Bay is a Gent living at his ease compared to them.

"Still they are happy, and amidst all their sufferings and privations if they take Beaver all is well. Thoughtless beings, how much more comfortable and with less labour could they earn an honest livelihood in their own Country than they do in this. And many are aware of this, but a roving life pleases them, and with nearly all it would be viewed more as punishment than a favour to send them to Canada."[885]

NOTES

1. Harold A. Innis, The Fur Trade in Canada . . . (Yale Western Americana ed., New Haven: Yale University Press, 1962), 38. It is not entirely certain, however, whether "hunt" meant "trap" or "trade" in this instance.

2. Ibid., 135,264.

3. David Thompson, Travels in Western North America, 1784-1812, ed. by Victor G. Hopwood (Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1971), 155-158.

4. For a detailed account of this method, based on original sources, see Carl P. Russell, Firearms, Traps, & Tools of the Mountain Men (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1967), 98-102. It was not desirable to use hunting methods that pierced the skins of the beaver or permitted them to be soaked with blood.

5. Thompson, Travels, 160.

6. Russell, Firearms, Traps, & Tools, 124-125.

7. Thompson, Travels, 160-161. The great historian of the Canadian fur trade, Harold A. Innis, believed that the use of steel traps for beaver probably spread westward slowly, since these devices were heavy to carry. However, the fact that in 1764 Sir William Johnson, British Superintendent of Indian Affairs in North America, believed that 5000 beaver traps were required for the Indian trade would seem to indicate widespread use even by that date. Innis, The Fur Trade, 263-264; Russell, Firearms, Traps, & Tools, 124-125.

8. Daniel W. Harmon, A Journal of Voyages and Travels in the Interior of North America . . . (New York: Allerton Book C., 1922), 285.

9. Innis, The Fur Trade, 264.

10. B. C. Payette, comp., The Northwest (Montreal: Payette Radio Limited, 1964), 136.

11. Paul Chrisler Phillips, The Fur Trade (2 vols., Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1961), II, 233, 234.

12. Russell, Firearms, Traps, & Tools, 152-153.

13. Harmon, A Journal of Voyages, 19.

14. Elliott Coues, ed., New Light on the Early History of the Greater Northwest . . . Journals of Alexander Henry . . . and of David Thompson . . . (2 vols., Minneapolis: Ross & Haines, Inc., 1965), I, 122, 132. It should be noted, however, that Henry's men appear to have gathered largely other furs than those of the beaver.

15. Harmon, A Journal of Voyages, 133.

16. Thompson, Travels, 26-27.

17. Phillips, The Fur Trade, II, 248n, 259.

18. Ibid., 260.

19. Ibid., II, 262-269; Hiram Martin Chittenden, The American Fur Trade of the Far West . . . , ed. by Stallo Vinton (2 vols., New York: Barnes & Noble, Inc., 1935), I, 140-142.

20. Phillips, The Fur Trade, II, 390-395.

21. Ibid., 396.

22. Dale L. Morgan, Jedediah Smith and the Opening of the West (Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, inc., 1953), 19-20. Ordinarily a somewhat later date is given for this advertisement, but Morgan makes clear the sequence of newspapers in which the notice appeared.

23. Ibid., 28-29.

24. Ibid., 91-92.

25. Ibid., 156, 171; Phillips, The Fur Trade, II, 396. Phillips appears to indicate that Ashley and Henry had intended to employ the rendezvous system from the inception of their partnership, but Morgan seems to believe that it was two or three years before Ashley fully grasped the significance of the concept.

26. An adequate summary of the activities of the Southwestern trappers will be found in Phillips, The Fur Trade, II, 509-552. However, the best treatment of the subject is David J. Weber, The Taos Trappers: The Fur Trade in the Far Southwest, 1540-1846 (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1971).

27. E. E. Rich, ed., Journal of Occurrences in the Athabasca Department by George Simpson, 1820 and 1821, and Report (Publications of the Hudson's Bay Record Society, vol. I, London: The Hudson's Bay Record Society, 1938) (hereafter cited as HBRS I), 389, 421.

28. HBRS I, 380-381, 458; E. E. Rich, The History of the Hudson's Bay Company, 1670-1870 (2 vols., Publications of the Hudson's Bay Record Society, vols. XXI, XXII, London: The Hudson's Bay Record Society, 1958-1959), 419, 470.

29. It is recognized that men of the North West Company and perhaps a few freemen had crossed the Rockies prior to 1805, but continuous operations did not begin until that year or, more exactly, perhaps, until 1806. For an excellent summary of the fur trade in these inland regions to 1811, see Arthur S. Morton, A History of the Canadian West to 1870-71 (2nd ed., Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1973), 466-497.

30. .Ibid. For more detail, see Simon Fraser, The Letters and Journals of Simon Fraser, 1806-1808, ed. by W. Kaye Lamb (Toronto: The Macmillan Company of Canada, Ltd., 1960); Daniel Williams Harmon, Sixteen Years in the Indian Country: The Journal of Daniel William Harmon, 1800-1816 (Toronto: The Macmillan Company of Canada, Limited, 1957); and Thompson, Travels.

31. Morton, History of the Canadian West, 479.

32. Washington Irving, Astoria, or Anecdotes of an Enterprise Beyond the Rocky Mountains, ed. by Edgely W. Todd (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1968), 135, 135n.

33. Ibid., 268.

34. E. E. Rich, ed., Peter Skene Ogden's Snake Country Journals, 1824-25 and 1825-26 (Publications of the Hudson's Bay Record Society, vol. XIII, London: The Hudson's Bay Record Society, 1950) (hereafter cited as HBRS XIII), xxviii.

35. Irving, Astoria, 261-262.

36. Gabriel Franchère, Narrative of a Voyage to the Northwest Coast of America in the Years 1811, 1812, 1813, and 1814 . . . (New York, 1854), 130, 142.

37. Kenneth Wiggins Porter, John Jacob Astor, Business Man (2 vols., Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1931), I, 531. The men were Alexander Carson and Pierre Dulauny, members of the Hunt party.

38. Alexander Ross, Adventures of the First Settlers on the Oregon or Columbia River . . . (London: Smith, Elder, and Co., 1849), 194.

39. Alexander Ross, The Fur Hunters of the Far West, ed. by Kenneth A. Spaulding (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1956), 187.

40. Irving, Astoria, 436-437.

41. See F. D. Haines, "McKenzie's Winter Camp, 1812-13," in Oregon Historical Quarterly (hereafter cited as OHQ), XXXVII (December, 1936), 329-333.

42. Ross, Adventures of the First Settlers, 219.

43. Ibid., 215-221.

44. Irving, Astoria, 443, 445, 448, 453-454n.

45. Morton, History of the Canadian West, 503; Rich, History of the Hudson's Bay Company, II, 251-252.

46. Irving, Astoria, 454-455n, 498.

47. Ibid., 498-500; Gabriel Franchère, Adventures at Astoria, 1810-1814, ed. by Hoyt C. Franchère (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1967), 132-133.

48. Ross, Fur Hunters of the Far West, 53.

49. HBRS XIII, xxx. It is generally stated that these decisions were made at the council meeting during June, 1816. However, a careful reading of Ross seems to show that news of several of the reforms was received at Fort George by the express which arrived in the fall of 1815 and that the changes were discussed at the Fort George Council during June, 1816. The appointment of McKenzie to the inland command evidently was known at Fort George during June, several months before that gentleman's arrival in October, 1816. Therefore the deliberations resulting in the changes must have taken place in 1815. This view is shared by D. W. Meinig, The Great Columbia Plain . . . (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1968), 61.

50. Ross, Fur Hunters of the Far West, 55-57.

51. Ibid., 68. Elliott Coues states that McKenzie was at Fort George on September 30, 1816. New Light on the Early History of the Greater Northwest, II, 761n.

52. Ross, Fur Hunters of the Far West, 71.

53. Ibid., 78-81. Phillips states that McKenzie spent the winter of 1816-1817 "trading through the country," seeming to indicate that "explorations" were made at that time. The Fur Traders, II, 303. However, in view of the fact that he was at Spokane House on February 12, 1817, and that he returned to Fort George shortly thereafter, it is likely that Ross was correct when he implied that McKenzie's operations were largely confined to visiting "several" of the posts under his charge.

54. Ross, Fur Hunters of the Far West, 83.

55. Ibid., 108-111.

56. Ibid., 117-120, 146.

57. Ibid., 121-125. As has been seen, previous trapping activities in the Snake Country had been carried on by small groups of hunters. Even the Americans to the east, though Lisa and others had sent large bodies to the mountains, had hitherto generally operated by scattering small parties over wide areas. McKenzie's contribution was the use of large, heavily armed bands to hunt in regions where Indians were hostile, though his men often separated into smaller parties once the trapping grounds had been reached.

58. Frederick Merk, The Oregon Question (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1967), 74.

59. Peter Skene Ogden wrote in 1826: "The Snake Country is bounded on the North by the Columbia Waters On the South by the Missourie, On the West by the Spanish Territo[ries] and the East by the Saskatchewan Tribes." HBRS XIII, 262.

60. Ross, Fur Hunters of the Far West, 125.

61. The editor of the 1956 edition of Ross's Fur Hunters incorrectly identified this stream. The matter is set straight in Gloria Griffen Cline, Exploring the Great Basin (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1963), 96-97.

62. HBRS XIII, 87-88n.

63. Ross, Fur Hunters of the Far West, 134-136. Identification of the Bear River as one of the features discovered by McDonald is based on sources cited in Cline, Exploring the Great Basin, 96.

64. Ross, Fur Hunters of the Far West, 138.

65. Ibid., 139.

66. Ibid., 142.

67. Ibid., 149. In a journal written in 1824, Alexander Ross stated that McKenzie had ordered Kittson to build a post near the mouth of Boise River in the summer of 1819 but that the place was burned by Indians before completion and that two men were killed. T. C. Elliott, ed., "Journal of Alexander Ross -- Snake Country Expedition, 1824," in OHQ, XIV (December, 1913), 380,384. See also Cline, Exploring the Great Basin, 97n; and HBRS XIII, 91, 224. Ross does not mention such an event in his Fur Hunters.

68. Ross, Fur Hunters of the Far West, 149-153, 171.

69. Ibid., 177; Cline, Exploring the Great Basin, 98, citing a letter in the Hudson's Bay Company Archives.

70. Ross, Fur Hunters of the Far West, 244, 249; Elliott, "Journal of Alexander Ross," in OHQ, XIV, 380; T. C. Elliott, "Last Will and Testament of John Day," in OHQ, XVII (December, 1916), 373-379; HBRS XIII, 29-30n, 224.

71. Elliott, "Journal of Alexander Ross," 381, 384. Kittson later stated that McKenzie had only 38 men with him at his winter camp at the northern edge of the Snake River Plains in 1820. HBRS XIII, 223-224.

72. Ross, Fur Hunters of the Far West, 176. See also note 69 above.

73. Ibid., 182-183.

74. Morgan, Jedediah Smith, 397, note 20.

75. Ross, Fur Hunters of the Far West, 185.

76. Morgan, Jedediah Smith, 118. As Morgan points out (p. 395, note 3) Ross's narrative was long almost the only source concerning McKenzie's expeditions, but new materials are now available which require further study. For a more detailed summary of his activities, see Jean C. Nielson, "Donald McKenzie in the Snake Country Fur Trade, 1816-1821," in Pacific Northwest Quarterly, XXXI (April, 1940), 161-179.

77. Ross, Fur Hunters of the Far West, 185. Ross says McKenzie had been hired by the North West Company under a lump-sum agreement and that he returned East because his "contract" with the firm had "expired," but since McKenzie was a partner in the company it is difficult to believe that Ross fully understood the situation. Ross also says that McKenzie went East in the autumn of 1822, but this would have been impossible since the new chief factor attended a council at Norway House during June of that year.

78 Rich, History of the Hudson's Bay Company, II, 419-420.

79. Morgan, Jedediah Smith, 118.

80. Ibid., 118-119; Cline, Exploring the Great Basin, 98.

81. Coues, New Light on the Early History of the Greater Northwest, II, 839.

82. Ibid., 860.

83. Ibid., 861.

84. Ross, Fur Hunters of the Far West, 72-73.

85. Ibid., 73.

86. Ibid., 74-77.

87. Ibid., 132.

88. Ibid., 132-133. This expedition probably was not the first to trap on the Umpqua. There are reports that the Astorians penetrated to this region. The Umpqua massacre appears to have taken place in 1819. Hubert Howe Bancroft, History of the Northwest Coast (2 vols., San Francisco: A. L. Bancroft and Co., 1884), 288-289. It is possible that this expedition was not a separate one but was identical with one said to have been sent out under Thomas McKay during 1820. E. E. Rich, ed., The Letters of John McLoughlin from Fort Vancouver to the Governor and Committee, Second Series, 1839-44 (Publications of the Hudson's Bay Record Society, vol. VI. London: The Hudson's Bay Record Society 1943) (hereafter cited as HBRS VI), 114.

89. E. E. Rich, ed., The Letters of John McLoughlin from Fort Vancouver to the Governor and Committee, First Series, 1825-38 (Publications of the Hudson's Bay Record Society, vol. IV, London: The Hudson's Bay Record Society, 1941) (hereafter cited as HBRS IV), 347.

90. HBRS VI, 114.

91. For a slightly different account of this affair, see Frederick Merk, ed., Fur Trade and Empire: George Simpson's Journal . . . 1824-1825 . . . (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1931), 113.

92. HBRS XIII, xx.

93. Ross, Fur Hunters of the Far West, 129-132.

94. Ibid., 134.

95. T. C. Elliott, "Peter Skene Ogden, Fur Trader," in OHQ, XI (September, 1910), 241. Ogden's exact movements during these years have not yet been determined.

96. Merk, Fur Trade and Empire, xxviii.

97. R. Harvey Fleming, ed., Minutes of Council, Northern Department of Rupert Land, 1821-31 (Publications of the Hudson's Bay Record Society, vol. III, London: The Hudson's Bay Record Society, 1940) (hereafter cited as HBRS III), 302-303.

98. Merk, Fur Trade and Empire, 176-177.

99. Ibid., 193.

100. Merk, Fur Trade and Empire, 195.

101. HBRS IV, xxii.

102. Merk, Fur Trade and Empire, 208.

103. Ibid., 42.

104. Ibid., 54.

105. Ibid., 94-95.

106. Ibid., 102.

107. Ibid., 94.

108. Ibid., 89-90; HBRS III, xxvii-xxviii.

109. Merk, Fur Trade and Empire, 45.

110. Ibid., 185.

111. For policy statements by Simpson and the London directors in this regard, see ibid., 46, 242, 252.

112. HBRS III, xxvii. It should be noted that the "fur desert" policy was not confined to the Columbia. It had long been applied east of the mountains whenever foreign competition threatened.

113. Merk, Fur Trade and Empire, 52.

114. Ibid., 88.

115. Ibid., 90.

116. Ibid., 114.

117. Ibid., 114, 195, 248-250.

118. Ibid., 141-142.

119. Phillips, The Fur Trade, II, 437.

120. E. E. Rich, ed., Part of Dispatch from George Simpson . . . 1829 (Publications of the Hudson's Bay Record Society, vol. X, London: The Hudson's Bay Record Society, 1947) (hereafter cited as HBRS X), 126-127.

121. Merk, Fur Trade and Empire, xxix.

122. Morgan, Jedediah Smith, 120.

123. Morgan, Jedediah Smith, 120. For biographical data on Bourdon, see K. G. Davies and A. M. Johnson, eds., Peter Skene Ogden's Snake Country Journal, 1826-1827 (Publications of the Hudson's Bay Record Society, vol. XXIII, London: The Hudson's Bay Record Society, 1961) (hereafter cited as HBRS XXIII), 92n, and sources cited therein.

124. Merk, Fur Trade and Empire, 194. Ross says that after McKenzie left the Columbia in 1821 the old North Wester prejuicesiin favor of Spokane House "were revived." Ross, Fur Hunters of the Far West, 207-208.

125. This account is based largely upon Morgan, Jedediah Smith, 120-121; see also Merk, Fur Trade and Empire, 193-194.

126. HBRS III, 24. Bourdon's name also appears in the records as Bourdeau, Le Bourdeau, and Bordoe.

127. Merk, Fur Trade and Empire, 193-194, 196.

128. What McLoughlin described as a journal of the "transactions" of the "1822/3" Snake Expedition is in the Hudson's Bay Company Archives, B.208/a/1. However, since it was kept by McDonald from April 15-July 22, 1822, and by James Birnie from July 23, 1822-April 20, 1823, it cannot cover McDonald's 1823 journey.

129. HBRS XIII, 16, 214.

130. Finan McDonald to John George McTavish, April 5, 1824, as quoted in Morgan, Jedediah Smith, 122-123. The editor of the 1956 edition of Ross's Fur Hunters identifies the site of this encounter as near Brenner, Montana. However, a careful reading of the Ogden and Kittson journals in HBRS XIII, 21-25, 217-219, clearly indicates that the site was on the western side of Lemhi Pass. Morgan also seems to take the latter view. Jedediah Smith, 124.

131. HBRS XXIII, 92.

132. Morgan, Jedediah Smith, 123. For a more detailed account of the battle, see Ross, Fur Hunters of the Far West, 239-242.

133. Morgan, Jedediah Smith, 123.

134. Ross, Fur Hunters of the Far West, 207.

135. Morgan, Jedediah Smith, 125.

136. HBRS III, 53. This account of McDonald's expedition is based largely on Morgan, Jedediah Smith, 121-125, supplemented by Ross, Fur Hunters of the Far West, 207-208. For further sources, see those cited by John S. Galbraith, The Hudson's Bay Company as an Imperial Factor, 1821-1869 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1957), p. 442, notes 20-21.

137. HBRS III, 53.

138. Ibid., 53n; Galbraith, Hudson's Bay Company as an Imperial Factor, p. 442, note 22; Ross, Fur Hunters of the Far West, 206-207.

139. Ross, Fur Hunters of the Far West, 206-208.

140. Merk, Fur Trade and Empire, 198.

141. Ross, Fur Hunters of the Far West, 208-209.

142. Ibid.; Cline, Exploring the Great Basin, 100; Elliott, "Journal of Alexander Ross," in OHQ, XIV, 369-370. However, according to a notation based on Ross's original manuscript journal, the party consisted of "10 servants and 54 men and lads." HBRS X, 526.

143. Ross, Fur Hunters of the Far West, 213.

144. Ibid., 245-246.

145. Elliott, "Journal of Alexander Ross," 382; Morgan, Jedediah Smith, 127-128; Ross, Fur Hunters of the Far West, 251-252, 282. Ross's accounts differ as to where he was to rendezvous with the Iroquois.

146. "The Adventures of Alexander Ross in the Snake Country," in Idaho Yesterdays, vol. 14, no. 1 (Spring, 1970), 12.

147. Ross, Fur Hunters of the Far West, 267.

148. There is a conflict of evidence as to where the Iroquois were to rejoin the party. In one place Ross says the rendezvous was to be at the Three Buttes on the Snake Plains. Ross, Fur Hunters of the Far West, 282. There is also a difference of opinion as to the place where Ross waited for the Iroquois. The anonymous author of the article, "The Adventures of Alexander Ross in the Snake Country," who evidently has seen Ross's original manuscript journal, favors the Pahsimeroi location (p. 14), while the editor of Fur Hunters of the Far West declares for the Lemhi (p. 282).

149. Ross, Fur Hunters of the Far West, 284.

150. "Journal of Alexander Ross," 385.

151. Morgan, Jedediah Smith, 128.

152. Ibid., 115, 128.

153. Ibid., 128, 129, 398 note 30.

154. "Journal of Alexander Ross," 385; Morgan, Jedediah Smith, 129-130.

155. "Journal of Alexander Ross," 385; Morgan, Jedediah Smith, 130; "The Adventures of Alexander Ross," 14. Phillips thinks the Bitterroot Mountains were crossed "probably" by Lost Trail Pass. The Fur Trade, II, 446. Ross's original journal of his expedition is in the Hudson's Bay Company Archives in Winnipeg (B.202/a/1), but as far as the present writer is aware it has not yet been published in its entirety. Exderpts published in the already cited "Journal of Alexander Ross" are of interest and value but do not permit an accurate reconstruction of the route. The best account in print is in Ross, Fur Hunters of the Far West, 206-293, but Ross wrote it many years after the event, and although he obviously referred to a journal or other notes, there are a number of inaccuracies. Both Morgan and the anonymous author of "The Adventures of Alexander Ross" obtained information from the manuscript journal, and thus their narratives throw new light on the expedition.

156. HBRS III, 53n; Ross, Fur Hunters of the Far West, 293.

157. "Journal of Alexander Ross," 386; Ross, Fur Hunters of the Far West, 293; Galbraith, Hudson's Bay Company as an Imperial Factor, 88; Rich, History of the Hudson's Bay Company, II, 482. Ross was to receive only £100 per year as schoolmaster instead of the £120 he was paid as head of the Snake parties.

158. HBRS III, 84.

159. For proof that Simpson heard from Ross while at Spokane House, see Merk, Fur Trade and Empire, 46, 247.

160. Ibid., 45-46.

161. Ibid., 46.

162. Ibid., 44-47. The instructions to reach the Colorado River were based on a misconception that the Bear River, only the upper waters of which had been examined by earlier British expeditions, was a branch of the Colorado. For a discussion of this matter see Cline, Exploring the Great Basin, 101.

163. Merk, Fur Trade and Empire, 54-57.

164. HBRS XIII, 209.

165. "Journal of Alexander Ross," 388.

166. HBRS XIII, 2-3, 209-210; Contrast with "Journal of Alexander Ross," 388. In 1829 Governor Simpson said that Ogden's first expedition was "our largest . . . consisting of 58 men." HBRS X, 52.

167. "Journal of Alexander Ross," 388.

168. For examples, see HBRS XIII, 6, 7.

169. Ibid., 7.

170. Ibid., 18-19, 216.

171. Ross, Fur Hunters of the Far West, 193. See also "Journal of Alexander Ross," 376.

172. Merk, Fur Trade and Empire, 45.

173. HBRS XIII, xl.

174. "Journal of Alexander Ross," 385.

175. HBRS XIII, 219.

176. Ibid., 29-32, 225. The editor of Ogden's journal has mistakenly identified Little Lost River as the present Birch Creek. See Morgan, Jedediah Smith, p. 399, note 8.

177. HBRS XIII, 35, 227.

178. Ibid., 43.

179. The location of this camp is given as identified by Morgan, Jedediah Smith, 145, 403. Ogden's journal is not clear on this point.

180. HBRS XIII, 51; Morgan, Jedediah Smith, 151.

181. HBRS XXIII, 139. Credit for pointing out that the Hudson's British were not bound by the Treaty of 1818 and hence did not consider the southern boundary of the Columbia Department to be the 42nd parallel belongs to David E. Miller and David H. Miller in their fine introduction to Glyndwr Williams, ed., Peter Skene Ogden's Snake Country Journals, 1827-28 and 1828-29 (Publications of the Hudson's Bay Record Society, vol. XXXIII, London: The Hudson's Bay Record Society, 1971), xix-xx.

182. HBRS XIII, 49-56; 233-236. For a discussion of the number of skins lost to the deserters, see HBRS IV, lxxvi.

183. HBRS XIII, 60.

184. Ibid., 60-68.

185. Ibid., 68, 243.

186. HBRS XIII, 63.

187. Ibid., 70.

188. Ibid., 79.

189. Ibid., 84.

190. This account of Ogden's first expedition is based almost entirely on T. C. Elliott, "The Peter Skene Ogden Journals: Snake Expedition, 1825-1826," in OHQ, X (December, 1909), 332-334; and on the journals of Ogden and Kittson published in HBRS XIII, 2-93, 209-257. Two path-breaking articles on this expedition by Frederick Merk, "Snake Country Expedition, 1824-25" and "The Snake Country Expedition Correspondence, 1824-1825," are conveniently reprinted, with some revisions, in Frederick Merk, The Oregon Question (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1967), 72-98. For additional details on certain sections of Ogden's route, see HBRS XXVIII, 169-172.

191. Ogden to Simpson, Fort Nez Percés, November 12, 1825, in HBRS XIII, 255-256.

192. HBRS XIII, 257.

193. Galbraith, Hudson's Bay Company as an Imperial Factor, 92; HBRS X, 53.

194. McLoughlin to Governor, Chief Factors, and Chief Traders, Fort Vancouver, August 10, 1825, as cited in Cline, Exploring the Great Basin, 144.

195. HBRS IV, 296-299.

196. Ibid., 302-304.

197. Ibid., 10.

198. Merk, Fur Trade and Empire, 270.

199. Ibid., 256.

200. H.B.C., Correspondence Book, Fort Vancouver, 1825, in Hudson's Bay Company Archives Winnipeg (hereafter cited as HBCA), B.223/b/1, MS, fols. 10-10d. All materials in the Company's Archives cited in this study were consulted with the kind permission of the Hudson's Bay Company.

201. Merk, Fur Trade and Empire, 270.

202. HBRS IV, 28.

203. Merk, Fur Trade and Empire, 270-271.

204. Merk, Fur Trade and Empire, 290-291.

205. HBRS IV, 34.

206. Ibid.; Galbraith, Hudson's Bay Company as an Imperial Factor, 92.

207. HBRS III, lxvii-lxviii.

208. HBRS IV, lxiii-lxiv; Merk, The Oregon Question, 82-84.

209. HBRS IV, 10; HBRS XIII, 95n. In another statement McLoughlin said there were only four Indians in McDonald's party. Not a single woman was allowed to accompany that expedition. HBRS XIII, 97n. However, in 1829 Governor Simpson said that Ogden's party consisted of 38 men. HBRS X, 53.

210. Merk, Fur Trade and Empire, 274-275, 281-282.

211. HBRS XIII, 108.

212. Ibid., 118.

213. Ibid., 123.

214. Ibid., 126.

215. Ibid., 260.

216. Ibid., 129.

217. Ibid., 131n, 204. See also Merk, Fur Trade and Empire, 273-274.

218. HBRS XIII, 204n. That the return of Gervaise (or Gervais) was prior to July 17 is inferred from the fact that on that date Ogden recorded that "all" his party had returned safely. Ibid., 205. For information on both these parties, see ibid., 264.

219. Ibid., 137.

220. Ibid., 143.

221. Ibid., 153, 256.

222. Ibid., 154.

223. Morgan, Jedediah Smith, 170, 172. See also Merk, Fur Trade and Empire, 284.

224. HBRS XIII, 155.

225. Ibid., 163-164.

226. Ibid., 195n. Finan McDonald went down the Columbia only as far as The Dalles, where the inland boat brigade was met. His family was with the brigade in anticipation of going "out" to Red River, and McDonald returned with them to Walla Walla.

227. The editor of Ogden's journal belives that Ogden started his canoe voyage down the Willamette from the vicinity of the present New Era, but no reason for this identification is given. Ibid., 205n.

228. Ibid., 205. An incomplete transcript of Ogden's journal for this expedition was published in T. C. Elliott, ed., "Journal of Peter Skene Ogden: Snake Expedition, 1825-1826," in OHQ, X (December, 1909), 331-365. This valuable article has since been supseded by the publication of the complete journal in HBRS XIII, 95-205.

229. Merk, Fur Trade and Empire, 283.

230. HBRS IV, 27-28; HBRS X, 53; OHQ, X, 365.

231. HBRS IV, lxvii; Merk, Fur Trade and Empire, 280.

232. John McLoughlin to John Warren Dease, Fort Vancouver, August 8, 1826, in H.B.C., Fort Vancouver, Correspondence Book, 1826, HBCA, B.223/b/2, MS, fols. 16-17.

233. Ogden, Snake Country Report 1825/26, Fort Vancouver, August 20, 1826, in HBRS XIII, 262-265.

234. Ogden to Simpson, Burnt River, July 1, 1826, in Merk, Fur Trade and Empire, 274-277; see also ibid., 281-284.

235. Ibid., 283.

236. HBRS IV, lxvi. See also ibid., 33-34.

237. HBRS XXIII, 229, 233.

238. HBRS IV, lxvi.

239. Ibid., 33. For the identification of "Lac Sale" as Great Salt Lake, see HBRS XXIII, xlii. [illegible]

240. For a discussion of the Buenaventura River question, see the able introduction by Dorothy O. Johansen to HBRS XXIII, xxvii-xliv.

241. HBRS IV, 14.

242. HBRS XXIII, 137.

243. Ibid., 3, 7, 8.

244. There are slight discrepancies in the various statements concerning the number of men in the party. For a discussion of this matter, see ibid., xlvn. The number of men on this third expedition was smaller than that on Ogden's previous trips to the Snake Country. The specific reasons for this decline are not entirely clear, but it may be significant that as early as March, 1825, Governor Simpson had decided that the 1824-1825 party was "too numerous," and he suggested that a force "not exceeding Forty strong" would be "easier managed and their services turned to better account." HBRS XIII, 253. In 1829 Simpson said Ogden's party numbered 30 men. HBRS X, 53.

245. HBRS XIII, 265.

246. HBRS XXIII, 3n, 4.

247. In his journal Ogden gives a confusing statement as to when this river was discovered, saying on October 7, 1826, that he was starting "for the River discovered last year (say summer) by Sylvaille." HBRS XXIII, 10. However, there seems no doubt that the find must have been made in the spring or early summer of 1826. See ibid., xl.

248. HBRS XXIII, 18.

249. Ibid., 20.

250. Ibid., 22.

251. Ibid., 26.

252. Ibid., 32.

253. Ibid., 37.

254. Ibid., 41.

255. Ibid., 78.

256. Ibid., 49.

257. Ibid., 49.

258. Ibid., 52.

259. HBRS XXIII, 57.

260. Ibid., 77.

261. Ibid., 84.

262. Ibid., 90.

263. Ibid., 99.

264. Ibid., 100.

265. HBRS IV, 44-45.

266. HBRS XXIII, 101.

267. HBRS IV, 45.

268. HBRS XXIII, 111.

269. HBRS IV, 45.

270. HBRS XXIII, 112.

271. Ibid., 114.

272. Ibid., 115, 116.

273. Ibid., 117.

274. For an example, see HBRS IV, 51.

275. David Douglas, Journal Kept by David Douglas . . . 1823-1827 . . . (reprint ed., New York: Antiquarian Press Ltd., 1959), 211.

276. HBRS XXIII, 118.

277. Ibid., 124.

278. Ibid., 134.

279. This account of Ogden's third Snake expedition is based almost entirely on his journal as printed in full in HBRS XXIII, 3-134. An incomplete transcript of this document was edited by T. C. Elliott and published as "Journal of Peter Skene Ogden's Snake Expedition, 1826-7," in OHQ, XI (June, 1910), 201-222.

280. HBRS IV, 49; HBRS XXIII, 134n.

281. HBRS X, 53. McLoughlin requested that Ogden's returns be credited to Outfit 1827, but the present writer does not know if the suggestion was adopted. HBRS IV, 50.

282. HBRS IV, 50.

283. HBRS XXIII, lvin, 134n.

284. HBRS IV, 50. For a list of the supplies and provisions provided to Ogden from Fort Vancouver on August 18, 1827, see HBRS XXVIII, 182-188.

285. McLoughlin to Dease, Fort Vancouver, August 11, 1827, in H.B.C., Fort Vancouver, Correspondence Book, 1827-8, in HBCA, B.223/b/3, MS, fol. 12d.

286. This date is found in the first entry in Ogden's journal of the expedition, but the entry was not made until later, probably on September 7. HBRS XXVIII, 3. McLoughlin said Ogden left on August 22. McLoughlin to James McMillan Fort Vancouver, October 19, 1827, in HBCA, B.223/b/3, MS, fols. 20-20d.

287. Same sources as those cited in note 286 immediately above.

288. HBRS XXVIII, 73.

289. HBRS III, 154n.

290. HBRS XIII, 253.

291. The decision to follow Ross's track was rather strange, since in January, 1827, Ogden had noted in his journal: "the Country Trapped by Mr. Ross three years since may yield a few Beaver but will not give us returns." HBRS XXIII, 55. But some weeks later he expressed the view that beaver might be found "towards the Sources of the South Branch [Snake River]." Ibid., 91-92.

292. HBRS IV, 56n. For more information on this abortive expedition, see HBRS X, 152-153; also HBRS XXVIII, 36n, 122n.

293. HBRS IV, 50.

294. McLoughlin to Ogden, Fort Vancouver, August 23, 1827, in HBCA, B.223/b/3, MS, fol. 18. See also McLoughlin to Governor, Chief Factor, etc., August 17, 1827, in ibid., fols. 16-16d.

295. HBRS XXVIII, 3.

296. Ibid., 6-7.

297. Ibid., 8.

298. Ibid., 10.